



James 1:12-18

1. _____ God's blessing as you remain _____ under _____.
(v 12)

2. God _____ trials, but He _____ you to sin. Don't get
_____ in the _____ of your _____. (v 13-15)

3. Don't be _____. God's _____ are _____. Anything else falls
_____. (v 16-18)

DAY 1

Note: All definitions this week are taken from a combination of HELPS Word studies, NAS Exhaustive Concordance, Strong's Concordance, and Thayer's.

Pray: As we've been studying the book of James, we've seen that true faith perseveres in the midst of suffering and temptation. This week we will be looking at how true faith responds to the Word of the Lord. As we begin studying, open your heart to the Lord by praying this prayer from Psalm 51: 10-12. *"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing (responsive) spirit."*

Memorize: We will be continuing to memorize James 2:14-18 this week by focusing on verse 15. Read the verse now a few times and write it on the line below.

James 2:15: If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food,

Study: Begin by reading James 1:19-27. Today we will be looking closely at verses 19-20.

1. What does James want his fellow believers to know and take note of? (vs 19)

a. *Be quick to* _____

b. *Slow to* _____

c. *Slow to* _____

2. Why does James give these instructions? (vs 20)

3. Let's look closer at the biblical definitions of a few key words.

quick: swift, without unnecessary delay, speedy, ready, prompt, without unjustified time-lapse

hear: listen, to hear God's voice which prompts Him to birth faith within

slow: taking time to deliberate, unhurried, while still moving forward after considering all the facts

anger: vengeance; properly, *settled anger*(*opposition*), i.e. rising up from an ongoing (fixed) opposition

- a. Specifically, to whom or what does James say we should we be quick to listen according to the definition of the word “hear?” _____

- b. According to the same definition, what happens when you listen and respond to the voice of the Lord? _____

- c. What connection can you make between your response to the Word (the voice of the Lord) and faith? (Look at Romans 10:17 if you are not sure) _____

- d. What keeps you from responding to the Word of the Lord as James describes in this passage: quickly, promptly, and without unnecessary delay? _____

- e. What do you think is in your heart when your response to the Word of the Lord is sluggish or when you put off doing what you know God is calling you to do? _____

- f. As opposed to our quick response to the Word of the Lord, we are to be slow to speak and slow to anger. James is cautioning his readers against easily yielding to provocation. The Jewish Christians who were reading this letter had a practice of fiercely debating religious topics, which would then pit them against others with differing opinions. James is warning them to be slow to speak as people who are authorities on spiritual matters as well as to be slow to heated debate on religious topics. How can you apply James’ warning to your own life? _____

- g. When a person takes time to deliberate before she speaks and she is not easily stirred to opposition against others, what does this demonstrate about her heart? _____

- h. Verse 20 says, “for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” James implies in this verse that man’s anger actually hinders the operation of the Word in your heart.
1. Why do you think that the anger of man hinders the work of the Word in our hearts?

 2. Where are you tempted to let the “anger of man” spring up in your life against others? _____

Pray: How has the voice of the Lord spoken to your heart through His Word today? Write a prayer of response to the Lord now. _____

DAY 2

Pray: Isaiah 50:4-5 says, “The Sovereign LORD has given me a well-instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught. The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears; I have not been rebellious, I have not drawn back.” (NIV) As we begin studying today, pray that the Lord would give you a teachable spirit. Thank Him for teaching you and opening your ears to His truth, and by faith tell him of your desire to respond to His word and His voice.

Memorize: Fill in the blanks for this week's memory verse.

James 2: ____: "If a _____ or _____ is poorly _____ or _____ in daily _____,"

Study: Begin by reading our passage this week, James 1:19-27. Today we will focus on verse 21.

1. Verse 21 begins with, "Therefore." Look back at verse 20. What does the "therefore" refer to?

2. Because man's anger doesn't bring about the righteous life that God desires, what does James instruct us?

- a. Put away all _____
- b. Put away _____
- c. Receive with meekness _____

3. First, let's look at what James calls us to get rid of, or lay aside. Look at the biblical definitions and then answer the questions.

filthiness: the underlying principle of evil which is present, even if not outwardly expressed; all evil desires and the practice that results from them.

rampant wickedness: overflowing of malignity; residue, remains; the wickedness remaining in a Christian from his state prior to conversion.

- a. Where does the evil and filth that James describes here come from? _____

- b. Why do you think that responsive faith requires the rooting out of evil and the practices of our old self? _____

- c. When James speaks of moral filth, he is using a word that is only found in this passage of scripture, the Greek *rhuparia*. It can also be translated pollution or defilement. Let's use an analogy to help us consider the ramifications of living as polluted or impure people. Think of what it means for air to be polluted. What are the consequences of breathing and living in an area where the air is polluted? _____

d. Now think about what it means to be a “polluted” Christian. What are the results when we choose to live as “polluted” Christians? _____

e. What are some practical steps you can take to live with a pure, unpolluted heart? (Think about what would help you to be “made new in the attitude of your mind,” and that which would help you “put off the old” and “put on the new,” according to Ephesians 4:22-24.)

4. Now let’s look at James’ next instruction for us. After we have laid aside the old desires and habits, we are to receive the implanted Word. How are we to receive the Word and why are we to receive it? _____

5. Look at the Biblical definitions. Use them to answer the questions.

receive with meekness: to open the mind and heart to instruction, to welcome God with humility and a teachable spirit, to give ear to, to embrace. (True meekness begins with the Lord’s inspiration and finishes by his direction and empowerment. It is a divinely balanced virtue that can only operate through faith.)

implanted: to bring into living union like a successfully grafted shoot; what is planted and therefore inborn or natural.

Word: specifically Christ, who expresses the thoughts of the Father through the Spirit; a person sharing a message, reasoning expressed by words.

a. What would indicate that a person is receiving the Word of the Lord with meekness and humility? _____

b. Are the characteristics you listed evident in your own life? _____

- c. How can you develop a heart that welcomes the instruction of the Lord readily and willingly? _____

- d. James uses a picture from nature to describe how the Word of the Lord, Christ himself, transforms us and saves us from our former nature. The picture is of a branch that has been engrafted into a tree. This branch becomes a part of the tree and produces a fruit or harvest that the tree has never before been able to produce. It is the implanted Word that allows us to produce the fruit of righteousness! Why is it so important that we humbly allow the Word of the Lord to take root in our lives? _____

Pray: Respond to the Lord now. Ask Him to give you a spirit that is both pure and teachable so that the implanted Word can transform you and bear fruit in your life that glorifies Him. _____

DAY 3

Pray: Psalm 146:8 says, “The Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous.” Ask the Lord to continue to give you a heart that responds to his Word with obedient action. Also ask the Lord to open your eyes to any blind spots; areas where you are merely hearing the Word and not putting it into practice.

Memorize: Continue memorizing James 2:15. Say the verse 3 times; out loud if you can. Then add to it the verse we learned last week and say both verses together.

Study: Read James 1:19-27. Today we will be focusing on verse 22.

1. What command does James give us in this verse? _____
2. Why is it so important that we “do” or obey the Word? Why is hearing the Word not enough?

3. What does James say can happen when we are only hearing the Word and not actually putting it into practice? _____

4. To “deceive yourself” means to “*reason falsely, in a misleading or erroneous way, to operate by distorted reasoning-using what seems plausible but later lets the person down.*” James warns us that the danger lying in merely hearing the Word is thinking we are making spiritual progress when in reality we aren’t. Think about a person who goes to the doctor and discovers that she needs to change her diet. The person learns all about ways to implement the diet change the doctor has prescribed. What happens if this person goes home and continues to eat in the same way she has always done, even after learning all about how she should change her diet?

5. In the same way, why is it that the person who listens to sermons, reads lots of books, and even studies the Bible endlessly won’t experience life change if she doesn’t apply what she has learned? _____

6. Let’s look at another passage of Scripture that can help us to evaluate where our own hearts are in regards to our responsiveness to the Word and its application in our lives. Please turn to Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23, and read the Parable of the Sower.

a. Fill in the blanks.

As a sower went out to sow his seed, some seed...

Where it fell	What happened to it	Jesus’ explanation of the parable and the heart it demonstrates
(vs 4) fell along the _____ _____	birds came and _____ _____	(vs 19) does not _____ <i>The Foolish Heart</i>

(vs 5-6) fell on rocky <hr/>	had no depth of <hr/> and was <hr/> by the sun	(vs 20-21) has no <hr/> <i>The Wavering Heart</i>
(vs 7) fell among <hr/>	the thorns grew up and <hr/>	(vs 22) the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches <hr/> the word and make it <hr/> <i>The Divided Heart</i>
(vs 8) fell on <hr/>	produced <hr/>	(vs 23) <hr/> the Word, and <hr/> _____, and bears <hr/> <i>The Responsive Heart</i>

Take a look now at your own heart...

- a. *Do you see evidence of a foolish heart: a heart that does not take time to understand and apply the Word?* Is your response to the Word and obedience to it like the seed that fell on the path? This person failed to understand the Word; to “join facts with comprehension and arrive at life-application.” How could you better seek to understand the Word and apply it specifically to your life? _____

- b. *Do you see evidence of a wavering heart: a heart that does not persevere because it's not rooted in the life source of Christ? Is your response to the Word and obedience to it like the seed that fell on rocky soil? This person failed to endure; literally he stumbled and became entrapped because he had no root. How can you habitually plug into the life source of Jesus Christ and his Spirit so that you can persevere in faith?* _____

- c. *Do you see evidence of a divided heart: a heart that is not wholeheartedly committed to the kingdom of God and has become mixed with the things of the world? Is your response to the Word and obedience to it like the seed that fell among thorns? This person became distracted with the worries of this life which caused the Word to be choked out and unfruitful. What in your life is crowding out the Word and how can you weed out those things?* _____

- d. *Do you see evidence of a responsive heart: a heart that understands the Word and as a result demonstrates life change? Is your response to the Word and obedience to it like the seed that fell on good soil? This person heard the Word, understood it, and it bore fruit. How can you cultivate a responsive heart in your own life?* _____

Pray: Take some time now to pray. Confess to the Lord any areas of your heart that reveal you are not hearing, understanding, and bearing fruit in response to the Word. Ask Him to develop in you a heart of faith that responds to his Word.

DAY 4

Pray: Psalm 19:7-8 says, "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." Thank the Lord that his Word is life to your soul and that it is

perfect and true. Ask the Lord to help you to apply what you learn today and be changed as you look into his Word.

Memorize: Continue memorizing our verse this week by writing it on the lines.

Study: Read our passage again, James 1:19-27. Today we will be focusing on verses 23-25.

1. In today's study, James gives us a picture of what it looks like to be a hearer of the Word and not a doer. What is the picture that James gives (vs 23-24)? _____

2. Read the definitions and answer the questions.

looks intently: to think to a conclusion, to consider exactly, attentively; to concentrate by fixing one's thoughts, to perceive clearly.

forgets: to overlook or neglect, to lose out of mind.

- a. According to the definition, how does the hearer look at the Word? Why might this be surprising? _____

- b. Notice that when this man finishes looking at the Word, he is not necessarily forgetting the Word, he is forgetting what he looks like in comparison to the Word. Why is this significant? _____

- c. The Word of God is compared to a mirror in this passage. The commentator Benson says, "The Word of God is a mirror in which a man can look with attention and discover the state of his soul and what state he is in and what character he bears in the sight of God. Too often we listen or read the Word and discover this, then turn aside forgetting what we've seen and need to respond to." James is emphasizing the importance of personal application of the Word in this passage. What strategies might help you to focus on application of the Word in your life? _____



3. Look now at verse 25.

a. How is the man who obeys the Word similar to the man who only hears it? _____

b. What differences do you notice between the hearer and the doer? _____

c. James describes the Word in this verse as “the perfect law, the law of liberty.” This means that Scripture is the complete instruction of the Lord that brings us freedom from the dominion of sin. Think about your own life and the importance of the Word of the Lord to you. Do your actions demonstrate that you believe the Word is your complete guide to freedom from sin and maturity of faith? How? _____

d. The result for the man who does the Word is that he is blessed; he receives “large grace (help and strength)” from the Lord. Why is this significant? _____

4. What do you notice about the habits of the person who is a doer of the Word that need to become part of your own life? _____

5. James warns us in these verses that we can be deceived. We can think that we are growing and maturing in our faith simply because we are hearing the Word. We can have an appearance of spirituality without any internal change. Let’s not be deceived! Summarize the steps you will take to make sure that you are a continual doer of the Word, and not merely a hearer.

Pray: Thank the Lord now for the power of his Word, the perfect law of liberty. Ask the Lord to give you eyes to see and a heart to understand and apply his Word, so that you are not deceived. _____

DAY 5

Pray: John 4:23 says, “But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.” Ask the Lord to open your eyes as you study today to any ways that you are not worshipping him in spirit and truth. Tell him of your desire to worship him and respond to him in the way that he desires.

Memorize: Say both memory verses that we have worked on out loud. Then write them on the lines.

James 2:14-15:

Study: Please read James 1:2-18. Today we’ll focus on vs. 16-18 and then review the passage.

This week we have seen that true faith responds to the Word of the Lord. We’ve learned that this kind of faith listens and obeys the voice of the Lord quickly, it receives the Word humbly, and it applies the Word consistently and intentionally. As we close our study this week, read our passage, James 1:19-27, one more time. Today we will focus on verses 26-27.

1. James deals with another self-deception in these 2 verses: thinking we are religious when we are not. The word “religious” in these verses means *worship expressed in action; faith in Jesus*. We could substitute the word “worshipper” and it would give us the intent that James had in mind.

- a. What are some characteristics people would say make a person religious?

- b. What are the practical evidences James gives of a person who is a true worshipper?

- c. What do you think James means when he says that the self-deceiver practices a worthless religion? _____



- d. How can we guard against performing good actions when our hearts are not really changed (this is called hypocrisy)? _____

- 2. Let's look specifically now at the practical evidences James gives us of a life that has been truly transformed and is obedient to the Word.
 - a. The first evidence we'll look at is transformed speech. Look at Luke 6:45. Why is the ability to control our speech an evidence of a transformed life? _____

 - b. How does your life demonstrate growth in this first characteristic of a true worshipper?

 - c. The next evidence of a true worshipper is a person who loves those in distress, specifically orphans and widows, by meeting tangible needs. Read Isaiah 58:6-7. What do you learn about the ways the Lord calls us to reach out to those in distress? _____

 - d. How does your life demonstrate growth in this next characteristic of a true worshipper?

 - e. The last evidence of a true worshipper is purity of conduct. This person is spiritually on guard to keep free from the stain of evil in the world. Read Psalm 119:9-16. What insight do you get about living a pure life from this passage? _____

 - f. How does your life demonstrate growth in this final characteristic that James gives of a true worshipper? _____

Pray: Don't be disheartened if you feel you have a lot of room to grow in these areas. Remember that true change in speech, love, and purity is a result of heart change that only the Lord can do in our lives as we respond to his Word. There is evidence in this passage that when James referred to pure and undefiled religion, he was picturing a precious stone, clear and without flaw. What a beautiful picture of

true worship! Are you willing to respond to the Lord right now and ask him to transform your worship into a beautiful precious jewel as evidenced by your faith in action? Pray now and ask the Lord to work in your heart to bring about transformation in your life as you respond to his Word.
